

Coins

Proof orders: The big buildup is on

By Roger Boye

WORKERS AT THE United States Mint began opening dozens of mail bags last week, each loaded with orders for 1979 proof sets.

"All the talk about the new Anthony dollar has created a lot of interest in this year's sets," one longtime hobby observer said. "In fact, the 1979 proof coins may establish a sales record."

That would be no big surprise, because new coin designs usually result in increased proof set sales. For example, the mint sold a record 4.1 million proof sets in 1976 when three coins bore special Bicentennial designs. By comparison, collectors bought 3.1 million sets last year when no design changes were made.

The 1979 sets—the first to contain the Susan B. Anthony dollar—will cost \$9 each, with the usual limit of five sets per customer. And again this year, the six coins in each set (cent through dollar) will be sealed in a plastic display case.

But unlike last year, the mint will wait until July to begin filling orders.

That's also the month the new Anthony dollars will be put into circulation.

"If we released some proof sets before July, those buyers fortunate enough to get their sets first would have an unfair advantage over other buyers," a mint spokesman told Numismatic News. Many hobbyists insist that early release of 1979 proof sets might prompt "coin speculators" to buy or sell proof Anthony dollars at artificially inflated prices.

Collectors already on the mint's mailing list should have received a computerized card and ordering instructions late last month. Persons not on the list should send their proof set orders, including a check or money order for payment, to Bureau of the Mint, 55 Mint St., San Francisco, Cal. 94175.

The mint will accept orders until about June 1, or until its production capacity is reached. Sets are supposed to be mailed to collectors before Dec. 31.